

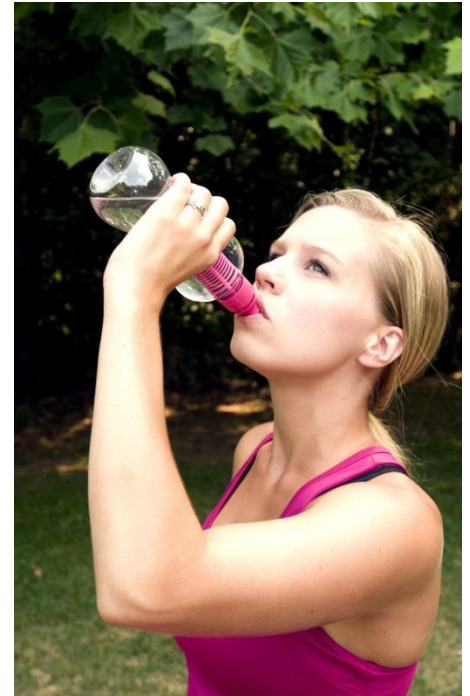


National Environmental Public Health Tracking Week

Keeping Cool and Staying Healthy During Extreme Heat

Extreme heat events are one of the most common causes of weather-related deaths in the United States. And, the number of heat-related deaths is rising. More frequent and severe heat waves are likely to occur as climate change continues to change weather patterns. These events pose a serious public health risk.

As we head into summer, there are steps you can take to prevent illness, injury, and death related to hot weather. Heat waves occur when temperatures reach unusually high levels compared to some historic averages for a specific area and remain high for a prolonged period. Humid or muggy conditions can add to the discomfort and severity of a heat wave. It is during these extended periods that extreme heat can be dangerous. People suffer heat-related illness when the body's temperature control system is compromised. Your body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough and your body temperature rises rapidly. When the humidity is high, sweat will not dry as quickly. This prevents your body from releasing heat quickly. Very high body temperatures might damage your brain or other vital organs.



Certain groups are at a higher risk for heat-related illness or injury. These groups include:

- adults over 65 years old and children under four years old,
- those with existing medical problems such as heart disease,
- people with no access to air conditioning

Extreme heat events are a leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United

A tool from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is helping us understand the connection between climate change, extreme heat and public health. The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network) is the best Internet resource that explains the relationships between some environmental and health problems. It does this by collecting information that would traditionally be kept separately by many government and

public health agencies. For example, the data available for climate change and health are from 5 different sources. Bringing it all together can help us discover the connections between our health and the environment.

The Tracking Network is helping us determine who is most at-risk to heat waves and where they live. Records of extreme temperatures, records of deaths that are related to heat and health, and social conditions that make people at-risk to heat are now available in the Tracking Network. This information equips public health officials to focus resources and better protect at-risk populations. And it can be used by individuals to identify opportunities to lower their risk of heat-related injuries, such as staying in air conditioned surroundings and staying well-hydrated when the temperature rises.

These tips from CDC's Extreme Heat Media Kit can help you prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths during hot weather.

Stay cool. Keep your body temperature cool to avoid heat-related illness.

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible.
- Find an air-conditioned shelter.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device.
- Avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Check on those most at-risk twice a day.

Stay hydrated. Because your body loses fluids through sweat, you can become dehydrated during times of extreme heat.

- Drink more water than usual.
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Remind others to drink enough water.

Stay informed. Stay updated on local weather forecasts so you can plan activities safely when it's hot outside.

- Check local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips.
- Learn the symptoms of [heat illness](#).

To learn more about CDC's Climate Change, Extreme Heat, and Health Toolkit, Environmental Public Health Tracking Network or the agency's efforts in climate and health please visit:

[CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking Network](#)

[CDC's Climate and Health Program](#)